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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. SPAIN MOVES TOWARD CLOSER TIES WITH EC AND NATO

NOTING "A NEW DYNAMISM IN SPANISH DIPLOMACY," EMBASSY MADRID EVALUATES FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA'S DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE IN EUROPE. FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FRENCH AND GERMAN EMBASSIES IN MADRID AND WITH THE MFA, THE EMBASSY REPORTS THAT AREILZA:

--HAS INITIATED A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO VISIT PORTUGAL AND MOST EC COUNTRIES BEFORE THE END OF MARCH;

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--WANTS TO HOLD AN EXPLORATORY MEETING WITH NATO

SECRETARY LUNS IN THE HOPES OF AN EVENTUAL NATO TIE;

--IS SEEKING SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND HAS PRESSED HARD FOR SPANISH OBSERVERS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS.

IN TALKS ALREADY HELD IN FRANCE, LUXEMBOURG AND THE FRG, AREILZA HAS DISCLOSED THE SPANISH TIMETABLE FOR PLANS LEADING TO DEMOCRATIZATION, INCLUDING:

--SOME SORT OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM IN THE COMING SUMMER;

--LOCAL ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN EARLY 1977, BASED UPON UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

WHILE GREATLY IMPRESSED WITH AREILZA'S SALESMANSHIP, THE FRENCH AND GERMANS ARE AWAITING SPECIFIC CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES BEFORE COMMITTING THEMSELVES TO MORE THAN PLEDGES OF SUPPORT FOR SPAIN'S EFFORTS. (CONFIDENTIAL) MADRID 334, 1/18.)

2. UK: CABINET SHOOTS IT OUT OVER DEFENSE CUTS

THE DISPUTE OVER THE LEVEL OF PROSPECTIVE DEFENSE BUDGET CUTS HAS EVIDENTLY BEEN RESOLVED IN A HEATED AND ACRIMONIOUS CABINET SESSION. ALTHOUGH DETAILS WILL NOT BE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, IT APPEARS TO EMBASSY LONDON THAT:

--THE 550 MILLION POUND CUT SOUGHT BY TREASURY WAS SLICED AT LEAST IN HALF, BUT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE IS DISAPPOINTED IT COULD NOT BE KEPT UNDER 150 MILLION.

--MAJOR PROGRAMS WILL CONTINUE RELATIVELY UNSCATHED, BUT PERSONNEL CUTS WILL BE MASSIVE. (CONFIDENTIAL) LONDON 760, 1/17.)

3. A PAT ON THE BACK FOR PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS

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AS THE CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS BEGAN JANUARY 18, EMBASSY COPENHAGEN NOTED PRIME MINISTER JORGENSEN'S COMMENT THAT "OUR BROTHER PARTIES IN SOUTHERN EUROPE ARE FACED WITH DIFFICULTIES OF AN ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS CHARACTER. WE MUST BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT AND COOPERATE WITH ALL DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN PLACES WHERE THESE ARE THREATENED. WE HAVE GREAT ADMIRATION FOR THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN PORTUGAL."

SOARES, IN TURN, SAID THE MEETING MEANS A LOT TO THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL AND:

--VOICED OPTIMISM ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL IN GENERAL AND RELATIONS BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE ARMED FORCES IN PARTICULAR;

--FORECAST THAT ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD ON THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION, APRIL 25, IN WHICH THE SOCIALISTS COULD CAPTURE 40 PERCENT OF THE VOTE.
(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) COPENHAGEN 188, 1/18.)

4. INDIA AND HER NEIGHBORS

A. INDIA CLAIMS BANGLADESH HEIGHTENS TENSIONS

IN A RECENT ASSESSMENT OF INDO-BANGALEE RELATIONS, INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER SEN TOLD EMBASSY DACCA:

--BANGLADESH OFFICIALS HAVE ARTIFICIALLY STIMULATED TENSIONS AND INDIA HAS IN NO WAY ACTED TO THREATEN BANGLADESH.

--NEVERTHELESS, THE ATMOSPHERE IS A GOOD DEAL BETTER THAN EARLIER, THANKS TO A SERIES OF BILATERAL MEETINGS ON TRADE AND BORDER PROBLEMS.

B. CHAVAN RAPS THE PAKS

INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN EXPRESSED PESSIMISM JANUARY 16 ABOUT NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN. HE MAINTAINED THAT:
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--THE TRADE AGREEMENT WAS A SMALL BEGINNING TOWARD BETTER RELATIONS; BUT

--PAKISTAN'S UNFRIENDLY STANCE HAS SLOWED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SIMLA AGREEMENT. (CONFIDENTIAL) DACCA 272, 1/16 AND (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) NEW DELHI 862, 1/17.)

5. LEBANON: KARAME RESIGNS IN CHALLENGE TO FRANGIE

IN WHAT OBSERVERS CHARACTERIZE AS A DIRECT CHALLENGE BY LEBANON'S MOSLEM LEADERS TO CHRISTIAN PRESIDENT FRANGIE, PRIME MINISTER KARAME ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION JANUARY 18. KARAME SAID HE HAD DECIDED TO RESIGN BECAUSE OF THE FAILURE

OF HIS MANY ATTEMPTS TO END THE LEBANESE FIGHTING. (UNCLASSIFIED) BEIRUT 559, 1/18.) KISSINGER

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